



# ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF TRIBAL EDUCATION: A STUDY OF TELANGANA STATE

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## ABSTRACT

The importance of education in the process of economic, political and social change has been widely recognised and well documented all over the world. The changes in the educational system should also reduce the social gaps by enabling proper recognition to whatever extent one is able to pursue or acquire a skill. The tribal community all over India have been subjected to various forms of deprivation such as alienation from land and other resources. Although certain constitutional safeguards are provided, there has been no economic, social and political mobility across this community. The Scheduled Tribes remain abysmally backward and socially excluded, still living in harsh environs. Education is one of the most important means to improve tribal personal endowments, build capabilities, overcome constraints and in the process, enlarge available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in well-being. As per Article 45 of the Constitution of India, Universalisation of Elementary Education is a Directive Principle of State Policy that underlines the need to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. In this paper an attempt is made to examine government policies for tribal education, tribal population and literacy rate and issues and challenges of tribal education.

**KEY WORDS:** Literacy rate, School Education, Management-Wise Enrolment, Telangana.

## INTRODUCTION:

Education is a process of controlling the behaviour of an individual. Education is one of the most important means to improve the personal endowments, build capabilities, overcome constraints and in the process, enlarge available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained improvement in well-being. The process of education and attainments thereof has an impact on all aspects of life. It is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion of people. Education can be used as a tool to empower the individual. Through child centered learning, students are able to see their own role in transformation. Societal change comes from the collective transformation of the individuals within that society. The relationship between education and social change takes a dual form—education as an instrument and education as a product. This implies that education as an instrument which is used as a means for bringing about desired changes in the society and in the later case changes in the educational structure follows as a consequence of changes which have already taken place in the society.

Education is an important parameter for any inclusive growth in an economy and it is an important avenue for upgrading the economic and social conditions of the Scheduled Tribes. Literacy and educational attainment are powerful indicators of social and economic development among the backward groups. The male-female gap in literacy and educational attainment among the scheduled tribes is significant. Scheduled Tribes are geographically, socially isolated and economically marginalized communities. In the post-Independence period, sincere and concerted efforts were made for the economic and educational development of tribals. Despite of these efforts the performance of the tribes in education is still much lower than the Scheduled Castes. This has led to drop outs and directly impacted their overall educational status.

## Statement of the problem:

The backwardness of the scheduled tribes is mainly due to the high incidence of illiteracy and very low level of education among the tribal people. Hence, the educational status of the scheduled tribes and the role of governance in this direction are highly essential. It is well known that the educational background of tribes is very discouraging as compared to the rest of the population.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main intention of this study is to identify the educational problems in tribal Areas in Telangana state to rejuvenate tribal education and suggest suitable measures to overcome these problems. However the following are considered as the objectives of the present study:

- 1) To analyse the District-wise tribal population and literacy rate in the state of Telangana.
- 2) To study District wise Hostels and Ashram schools for schedule Tribes in Telangana state
- 3) To identify the issues and challenges of tribal Education.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

This study is descriptive in nature and therefore the information presented is

based on the secondary data. Secondary information has been collected from various documents like books, journals, government reports, abstracts and published unpublished material from Directorate of Economic and statistics and District Information System for Education (DISE) in Telangana.

## Government Policies and Programmes for Tribal Education:

The Dhebar Commission of 1960 identified certain specified reasons for the educational backwardness of tribals. They were vague generalisations like inappropriate and unattractive teaching methods adopted by the teachers, etc. It also touched other problems like poor economic condition and subsistence economy. In such a situation, children are seen as economic assets to supplement the family income by working with the parents and with others. In a situation of dire necessities of life, education becomes a matter of luxury for the tribals. All these factors have contributed to work out a broader policy for tribal education. In this background, the Dhebar Commission made recommendations to provide the mid-day meal, clothing, free book, reading and writing materials, etc. to all the tribal children in backward areas. The commission further recognizing the topographical factors recommended the opening of schools in localities where there were at least 30 school-going children, though there should be a school within one mile. The commission then suggested adjustment of timing, vacations, and holidays of schools to suit the tribal social and cultural life. It even proposed to create an atmosphere of tribal culture in the schools.

Similarly, the Kothari Commission has also highlighted that the tribals deserve education with great emphasis and attention. In view of this, the Kothari Commission endorsed the recommendations of the Dhebar Commission with a note of urgency that intensive efforts must be made to provide for five years of early education to all tribal children. In order to achieve the literacy rate among tribals, the Commission also suggested the need to educate parents simultaneously. The growth of tribal education was very slow due to high dropout rate and the growing gap between tribals and non-tribals. Due to this higher education among the tribals also suffered severely.

The PESA (The Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 in fact, has made it mandatory for the States having scheduled areas to make specific provisions for giving wide-ranging powers to the tribes on the matters relating to decision-making and development of their community. A centrally-sponsored government scheme of ashram schools exclusively for Schedule Tribe children from elementary to higher secondary levels was initiated in the 1970s. But the poor quality of education in ashram schools, however, has undermined confidence in education as a vehicle for social mobility.

**The Janshala Programme:** It is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five UN Agencies – UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO and UNFPA—a community based primary education programme, aims to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalised groups, Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes/ minorities, children with specific needs. Suggestions some suggestions for improvement of tribal education are as follows:

- a) *Literacy campaign:* Proper awareness campaign should be organized to create the awareness about the importance of education. Extensive literacy cam-

- paign in the tribal dominated districts may be undertaken on a priority basis to literate the tribal
- Attitude of the tribal parents:* The attitude of the tribal parents toward education should be improved through proper counseling and guidance.
  - Relevant study materials in local languages:* All study materials should be supplied in local languages of tribes.
  - Appointment of Local teachers and female teachers:* It is suggested to appoint more tribal teachers and female teachers in the tribal areas. The ecological, cultural, psychological characteristics of tribal children should be considered carefully by the teachers in tribal areas.
  - Stipends and various scholarships:* Since higher education among the tribes is less, special ST scholarships should be provided to the tribal students perusing higher education, particularly in medical, engineering, and other vocational streams.

- Residential schools:* More residential schools should be established in each states and districts and extended up to PG level in tribal areas.
- Social security:* Social security of students, especially of adolescent girls is of great concern in residential schools.
- Proper Monitoring:* Higher level officials should check the functioning of schools frequently relating to the teaching methods, working hours, and attendance registers.

#### Education Schemes for Scheduled Tribes in the State of Telangana:

As per the 2011 census, in Telangana State, Schedule Tribe population constitute 9.1 per cent to the total population of Telangana. The literacy rate among Schedule Tribe is 49.5 per cent, which is much lower than the State average of 66.5 per cent. Presently Telangana state is functioning 269 Ashram Schools with a strength of 76,686 students, 203 hostels with a strength of 45,918 students and 101 Post Metric hostels with borders strength of 24,616. The data related to schedule Tribe population and literacy rate is shown in the below table -I.

**Table – I: Tribal Population and Literacy Rate in Telangana**

Sl. No.	District	Total Scheduled Tribe Population	No. of Literates			Literacy Rate		
			Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
1	Adilabad	4,95,794	1,30,838	89,084	2,19,922	61.44	41.37	51.35
2	Nizamabad	1,92,941	47,085	28,752	75,837	57.97	34.25	45.92
3	Karimnagar	1,06,745	28,820	20,090	48,910	60.85	42.19	51.49
4	Medak	1,68,985	40,976	22,146	63,122	56.92	32.04	44.73
5	Hyderabad	48,937	16,659	12,641	29,300	76.09	62.08	69.34
6	Rangareddy	2,18,757	62,588	41,495	1,04,083	65.73	45.87	56.05
7	Mahabubnagar	3,64,269	83,464	45,555	1,29,019	53.71	30.44	42.29
8	Nalgonda	3,94,279	1,04,938	59,065	1,64,003	59.96	35.56	48.08
9	Warangal	5,30,656	1,36,361	90,593	2,26,954	57.81	38.96	48.45
10	Khammam	7,65,565	2,00,493	1,50,974	3,51,467	59.75	43.67	51.59
Total		32,86,928	8,52,222	5,60,395	14,12,617	59.49	39.44	49.51

It is noted that the highest number of tribal population and literates were registered in the Khammam followed by Warangal, Adilabad and Nalgonda districts. Similarly the highest literacy rate was identified in the Hyderabad as it identified as Metropolitan city and Rangareddy district is also noted for highest literacy rate at 56.05 percent. The Khammam and Karimnagar districts are almost equal tribal literacy rate at around 52 percent. It is observed that the backward district mahabubnagar having lowest tribal population at 42.29 percent. Among the all the districts male literacy rate was dominating than the female literacy rate. Therefore the government should concentrate to improve the female tribal literacy rate to overcome their poverty and create the self-employment opportunities.

**Ashram Schools and Hostels:** The Government of India has started an innovative scheme for the promotion of education among Scheduled Tribes, i.e., the establishment of Ashram schools and hostels. The Ashram school concept started

in the Third Plan in all scheduled areas across India. It aims to promote education to the marginalised in a customised way. In addition to Ashram schools, there was construction of hostels for boarding and lodging to tribal students in the schedule areas. These special measures were introduced to achieve targeted results in elementary education among the tribals.

In order to promote the qualitative education to the tribal people the government of Telangana has initiated different types of innovative programmes such as: Telangana Gurukulam (TTWREI Society), Pre-Matric Scholarships, Post Matric Scholarships, Ambedkar Overseas Vidya Nidhi, Coaching in TOEFL/IELTS/GRE/GMAT is being given to ST students to secure admission for pursuing higher professional studies in Foreign Universities etc. The data related to number of Tribal students pursuing their education by staying at Telangana Government Hostels and Ashram schools is presented in the table – II.

**Table – II: District wise Hostels and Ashram schools for schedule Tribes**

Sl. No.	District	Hostels				Ashram Schools			
		No.	No. of Students			No.	No. of Students		
			Males	Females	Total		Males	Females	Total
1	Adilabad	7	-	1,253	1,253	116	17,642	20,069	37,711
2	Nizamabad	11	288	1,085	1,373	3	-	640	640
3	Karimnagar	11	340	763	1,103	14	852	826	1,678
4	Medak	15	466	1,385	1,851	4	147	311	458
5	Hyderabad	7	129	588	717	-	-	-	-
6	Rangareddy	12	688	1,955	2,643	4	996	361	1,357
7	Mahabubnagar	21	2,112	4,469	6,581	16	1,724	1,736	3,460
8	Nalgonda	39	3,026	8,829	11,855	11	2,145	810	2,955
9	Warangal	35	2,519	4,774	7,293	39	5,902	3,657	9,559
10	Khammam	45	5,503	3,189	8,692	76	11,849	14,891	26,740
Total		203	15,071	28,290	43,361	283	41,257	43,301	84,558

In order to improve the literacy rate among the tribal population the government has initiated different types of schemes and programmes. The establishment of hostels and ashram schools at various tribal localities is most significant. The highest number of hostels were established in Khammam district followed by Nalgonda, Warangal and Mahabubnagar. Whereas, the highest number of ashram schools were established in the Adilabad district (116) followed by Khammam (76) and Warangal district (39). It is also noticed that in almost all districts the female students were registered at a higher number in case of hostels as well as ashram schools. It is suggested that the government should increase the more number of hostels as well as ashrams schools at different backward tribal localities.

#### Education of Tribal Population: Issues & Challenges:

If we analyse the real issues of tribal population for taking education then we must find that there is higher concentration of poverty among the tribal population in both the rural as well as urban areas. Their weak resource base, their low position in socio-economic and political hierarchy, illiteracy, their relative lack of access to facilities provided by developmental measures; and their inadequate participation in institutions are mainly responsible for their backwardness as well as access to education. It is indeed a matter of deep concern that why the fruits of development fail to reach the weaker sections of our society despite our planned efforts.

#### Issues of Tribal Education:

There are many critical issues and problems in the field of tribal education. They are as follows:

- i. *Medium of language:* Language is one of the important constraints of tribal children which prevents them access to education.
- ii. *The Location of the Village:* The physical barriers creates a hindrance for the children of a tribal village to attend the school in a neighbouring village.
- iii. *Economic Condition:* The economic condition of tribal people is so poor that they do not desire to spare their children or their labour power and allow them to attend schools.
- iv. *Attitude of the parents:* As education does not yield any immediate economic return, the tribal parents prefer to engage their children in remunerative employment which supplements the family income.
- v. *Teacher Related Problems:* In the remote tribal areas the teacher absenteeism is a regular phenomenon and this affects largely the quality of education.
- vi. *Lack of Proper monitoring:* Proper monitoring is hindered by poor coordination between the Tribal Welfare Department and School Education Department.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

Education is the key to tribal development. Tribal children have very low levels of participation. Though the development of the tribes is taking place in India, but the pace of development has been rather slow. If government will not take some drastic steps for the development of tribal education, the status of education among tribes will be a story of distress, despair and death. Hence time has come to think it seriously about tribal education and inclusive growth. So, there is an urgent need for various government interventions, planners and policy makers to address this problem and allocate more funds in the central and state budgets for tribal education. Easy access and more opportunities should be provided to the tribal children in order to bring them to the mainstream of economic development.

Education, especially in its elementary form, is considered of utmost importance to the tribal's because it's crucial for total development of tribal communities and is particularly helpful to build confidence among the tribes to deal with outsiders on equal terms. Despite the sincere and concerted efforts by the government for the overall development of the scheduled tribes, they are still far behind in almost all the standard parameters of development. They are not able to participate in the process of development, as they are not aware of most of the programmes and policies made for their upliftment.

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